TELLS THE FACTS AND NAMES THE NAMES

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Not Ready for Prime Time

The Man for Whom Limbaugh Threw Over Sarah Palin

By Donald Juneau

Piyush "Bobby" Jindal, now the governor of Lousiana and Rush Limbaugh's poster boy Republican, has always been a man in a hurry. After graduating from Brown in pre-med (he never made it into medical school), he spent some time at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar. But he returned to his hometown, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to make his fortune there. The son of Indian immigrants, he had become completely Americanized. He converted to Catholicism and completely cast off even rudiments of Indian culture. It is not as if he has rejected his parents' heritage, but he has studiously ignored it, and has never made the slightest suggestion that his roots came out of the Indian subcontinent. Early on, he took the name of "Bobby," from one of the characters of *The Brady Bunch*, and has tried to fit into a homogenized, white-bread American persona. This has not prevented him from receiving quite a few political contributions from Indian Americans during his political career.

Back in Baton Rouge, the governor of the state at that time was Murphy "Mike" Foster, an amiable, if rather indolent, plantation owner from St. Mary Parish, a compounding of sugarcane tracts, swamps and oil fields in South Louisiana. Foster had been a state senator, elected as a Democrat, but back in the early 1990s many Louisiana politicians switched over to the Republican Party, and so did Foster. In the state Senate, Foster spon-

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Direct - to - Consumer Advertising – A License to Print Money

How the T.V. Networks Went into the Drug Peddling Business

By Alexander Cockburn

When I was a lad of 14, at school in Scotland, a news mogul called Roy Thompson used five simple words to describe the higher purpose of commercial television. 1955 was the year the BBC lost its monopoly on TV provision in Britain. The government handed out licenses to new broadcasting companies which, unlike the BBC, could run ads. This privilege was, Thompson publicly rejoiced, "a license to print money."

That's the bottom line. Any time you see a TV proprietor or executive talking bravely about freedom of expression and the public's right to know, just remember the essential freedom the man has in mind is exactly what Thompson was happily hailing: the freedom to coin money.

When, some time in the 1960s, the late Frank Stanton, overseeing news operations at CBS, asked his boss William Paley, the network's founder, for more time for newscasts, Paley shook his head. "The minute's just too valuable," he told Stanton, meaning he wasn't prepared to surrender one more second of commercials in the prime time slot.

Now let's roll forward half a century from Thompson's cries of joy to a touching ceremony four years ago in the Guggenheim Museum on upper Fifth Avenue, New York, once again featuring a CBS employee Steve Kroft, a man known to millions as one of the journalists on the top-rated *60 Minutes* program, renowned for fearless muckraking, laden with Emmy awards and kindred prizes by an admiring industry.

What muck was Kroft turning over that night in the Guggenheim? Alas, he was involved up to the lapels of his tuxedo in a mucky charade that in more dignified times would have been the subject of a biting segment on *60 Minutes*.

In Frank Lloyd Wright's temple of modern art, he was celebrating the dark arts of hucksterism and quackery whose earlier exponents – the patent medicine peddlers of the 19th century – were standing objects of ridicule in that more honest age but whose current practitioners bask in such mellow surroundings as the Guggenheim, heaped with prizes by one of the stars of *60 Minutes*.

That night at the Guggenheim, September 29, 2005, was the occasion of the Seventh Annual PhAME Awards "for Excellence in Pharmaceutical Advertising and Marketing," a farcical affair in which PR companies scoop up prizes for the skill with which they tout the wares of their clients in the drug industry, the ceremony being co-sponsored by CBS, whose bottom line was nourished to the tune of over half a billion dollars in paid advertising by the drugmakers in that same year of 2005.

The judges? In 2005, as in other years, the panel of 32 consisted of drugmakers, their PR flacks, plus one representative from the ivory towers of academia, in the form of Rajeev Batra, "SS Kresge professor of marketing," plus Tom Delaney, a senior vice president of CBS. It was a big night for Eli Lilly, whose company rep received from newsman Kroft the "Marketer of the Year" award. One of Lilly's ad agencies, Foote Cone & Belding, carried off the "Best Integrated Campaign Winner" for its campaign for

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sored conservative legislation such as tort-reform, in which he was tutored by his good buddy over in Texas, George W. Bush. Foster ran for the governorship, and served two terms. He was essentially a do-nothing hands-off chief executive, not always a bad thing. Having abundant time on his hands, he also went to law school at the same time and received a law degree from Southern University in Baton Rouge. He met Jindal, and settled upon him as his protégé, giving him a job in the state hospital department.

Jindal eventually was able to get Foster to promote him to the secretaryship of the department. Once there, Jindal spent much of his time on the phone, bucking for a job in the federal government, which he eventually got, an assistant secretary position in the Department of Health and Human Services, a gift from Mike Foster's soul mate, George W. Bush, by then the president. However, he did make enough time to severely limit the access of poor people to Medicare, which was widely denounced, but Legal Services lawyers were unable to reverse this action in the courts.

The federal sinecure did not quell his restlessness. At Foster's urging, in 2002, Jindal ran for Congress, and took the seat for the Second Congressional District, just vacated by David Vitter, who had been elevated to the Senate. Even in Congress, Jindal manifested his old behavior of wanting to be somewhere else. He was not attentive to his congressional duties, missing many roll-call votes, and made only the most perfunctory of appearances on Capitol Hill, leaving neither a lasting impression nor a record of accomplishment. The reason for this was obvious, and did not surprise anyone who had been following him: he wanted another job. This time it was the governorship. Mike Foster whooped him up, but even that wasn't enough: he lost to Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, the sitting lieutenant governor, in 2003.

Then Jindal's name cropped up as a 2012 candidate, championed by none other than the Oxycontin Kid, Rush Limbaugh. So it was no surprise when Jindal was chosen to present the Republican response to President Obama's speech on February 24.

Like U.S. presidents, Louisiana governors generally expect to serve two terms, as limited by the state constitution, but Governor Blanco had the misfortune of having two hurricanes, Katrina and Rita, hitting less than a month apart, which devastated the state in the middle of her first term. She came into a lot of criticism, much of it undeserved, about her own conduct during the storms, even though the federal government, by contrast, had an inglorious response of flinty lack of compassion and lethal indifference. (For example, Katrina struck on Monday, August 29, 2005, but instead of visiting the Gulf Coast, Bush felt it necessary to fly to California for a series of fundraisers for the next couple of days, and when he did deign to fly down, he was photographed gazing out of an airplane window at the devastation, at an altitude of 5,000 feet.) Not surprisingly, Governor Blanco's poll numbers plummeted, and Jindal saw his opportunity. Blanco eventually withdrew, well before the race, and there was a somewhat lackluster field of candidates.

Jindal immediately came to the forefront, since he had been in the public eye for ten years. He continued to miss important votes in the House, including a bill for disaster relief for the two hurricanes. In his campaign, Jindal showed a side of himself, which had not been evident before. His only appearances were tightly scripted ones; he became inaccessible to the press, and he participated in no debates. In his public statements, he resorted to, and still affects, the imperial first-person plural, and at times talks down to his listeners, unable to restrain a tone of *de haut en bas.* It was hard to get any idea of who he really was or what he really stood for (but this may not have been an accident but a calculated effect). This remote, patronizing persona has been maintained to the present.

He won the race in the first runoff, in an extremely low turnout. He ran as a "reform" candidate, not an unusual gambit in Louisiana; this usually cloaks an extremely conservative political agenda, and is not at all populist. His pet reform was governmental ethics, and he called a special session of the legislature in order to enact a raft of ethical laws. Although these had high-sounding goals, careful examination of this legislation showed that, paradoxically, it would be more difficult to deter and prosecute ethical lapses because a specific intent would have to be proved to show an ethical violation. The existing ethical commission resigned en masse in protest over this. Jindal also made sure that the governor's office and his staff would not be covered by these ethics laws. It was commented that the laws themselves were good steps, but that the actual regulatory details were sorely wanting. Or, put another way, the devil is in the details.

It was during the regular legislative session, following the special session on ethics, that Jindal made a major blunder, one from which he has not recovered and which haunts him yet. The legislators had not received a pay raise in years, and decided to vote themselves one. Jindal took pains not to associate himself with this and adopted an agnostic position: if the legislature voted for it, he would abide by the majority vote. But the pay-raise

CounterPunch

EDITORS
ALEXANDER COCKBURN
JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

ASSISTANT EDITOR
ALEVTINA REA

BUSINESS
BECKY GRANT
DEVA WHEELER

DESIGN
TIFFANY WARDLE

COUNSELOR
BEN SONNENBERG

CounterPunch
PO Box 228
Petrolia, CA 95558
1-800-840-3683
counterpunch@counterpunch.org
www.counterpunch.org
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vote was met with a huge wave of protest, mainly from conservative sources. They made the valid point that Jindal's own conservative good faith was in question, and that his stand-offish position was at variance with the reformist one he had vaunted as being a fiscal watchdog.

Jindal dithered. At first, he repeated that he would not second-guess the legislature, and would abide by its vote. He was called upon to veto the bill, and on the day before the issue had to go to the vote, he maintained this no-second-guess posture. But the very next day he vetoed the measure. When the dust settled, his stature was greatly lessened. To the legislature, with whom he has to work, he appeared to be undependable, someone who would crumble under pressure. Many said that Jindal appeared weak, wavering and indecisive – the very criticisms which had been unjustly directed against Governor Blanco. The conservative critics expressed a lingering suspicion and unease, and have fastened an even greater scrutiny on him.

The state of Louisiana is now facing a huge deficit, and the legislature will again be in session. Jindal has already announced cuts, mainly in health services and education, the two most vulnerable areas, which affect the middle class, not particularly numerous in Louisiana, and the poor, who lack an advocate on their behalf. But that's the way politicians like Jindal and his role model, George W. Bush, have always operated: take it out against the marginalized and the poor, the working class and the lower middle class, who they calculate have no political power.

Now, Jindal has a plan on the table to turn the state into a giant HMO, with the insurance companies ladling out health care to the medically indigent. Louisiana has had a system of charity hospitals for the poor since 1741, and the charity hospital system was augmented under Governor Huey Long. The charity hospitals have always been hated by so-called "reform" governors, but they survived until Katrina. The main charity hospital in New Orleans, a magnificent Art Deco structure, which is still structurally intact, was subjected to the devastating flood after Katrina. The state of Louisiana applied for and received $65 million to refurbish the Superdome, but no grant application was made for Big Charity, which is two block away from the Superdome. It now sits, empty and damaged, but its condition can be restored. Jindal wants to tear this structure down and erect a new "teaching hospital," to be operated by Louisiana State University Medical School, about a quarter mile away, at an enormous cost, destroying a traditional old New Orleans neighborhood.

As far as the state's public health system, Jindal hired a former state health official from Florida, Alan Levine, who had been recommended for the Louisiana job by Governor Jeb Bush of Florida, to set up a statewide public health scheme operated by the insurance companies, a kind of gigantic HMO. But when the Florida health plan run by Levine was examined, it was found that it wasn't working too well. Levine was fiercely criticized in Florida and it was claimed that the program there was inefficient, poorly run and resulted in a lot of people, mostly poor, forgoing health care. Besides that, physicians and experienced health care professionals in Louisiana are dead-set against this HMO scheme, having suffered from the vagaries of insurance company behavior in the private HMO sector. It is also highly doubtful whether the Jindal HMO scheme will gain the essential assent of the federal government under the Obama administration.

Jindal's speech was an unmitigated disaster. Even Republicans and Conservatives were wincing and grimacing. Speaking in a sing-song voice, and in a condescending manner, the Jindal performance was inept and gratingly gauche.

When Hurricane Gustav struck Louisiana last September, Jindal put into operation a number of measures developed and adopted by Governor Blanco, and the state was able to avoid the chain of disasters caused by Katrina. Of course, Jindal has yet to publicly acknowledge Blanco's accomplishment, and he will never do so. He has been praised for his own performance, and he did do well, but it was due in large part to the preparatory steps taken by Kathleen Blanco.

Last summer, Jindal's name kept on turning up on a list of potential vice presidential nominees for the Republican Party. He played it coy, coming out with the rote words that he had been elected governor of Louisiana and would serve out his term, etc. McCain chose another state governor, Sarah Palin. Then Jindal's name cropped up as a 2012 candidate, championed by none other than the Oxycontin Kid, Rush Limbaugh. So it was no surprise when Jindal was chosen to present the Republican response to President Obama's speech on Tuesday, February 24. Obama gave his speech, which was forceful and eloquent, and won rave reviews. Then Jindal comes into the vestibule of the governor's mansion in Baton Rouge. It was an unmitigated disaster. Even Republicans and Conservatives were wincing and grimacing. Speaking in a sing-song voice, and in a condescending manner, the Jindal performance was inept and gratingly gauche.

Earlier, Representative Gingrey

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Floating the Past with John Holt

Yellowstone Drift

By Doug Peacock

Should you visit the Yellowstone River country with 13,000 years of human history in your head, the first thing you might notice is how little the landscape has changed. True, a few towns and ranches are now strewn about the topography. Yet, this thin cloak of agriculture falls lightly over the Yellowstone country; modern settlement can do little to flatter this lovely land. And it hasn't; the power and beauty of the raw habitat shines on through.

The native people who lived here before the white man showed up called this drainage the Elk River. These hills and valleys were the best hunting country anywhere. The mountain man Osborne Russell passed along the valley numerous times in the 1830s. Russell wrote: "This is a beautiful country the large plains extending on either side of the river (Yellowstone or Elk River) intersected with streams and occasional low spurs of mountains whilst thousands of Buffaloe may be seen in almost every direction and Deer Elk and Grizzly bear are abundant. The latter are more numerous than in any other part of the mountains. Owing to the vast quantities of cherries and plums and other wild fruits which this section of the country affords."

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the last of the great tribes contested for the lush game habitat of the Elk River. Even later, after the turn of the century, the ethnographer and photographer Edward Curtis found the Elk River watershed "a veritable Eden of the Northwest, with beautiful broad valleys and abundant wooded streams, no part of the country was more favorable for buffalo, while its wild forested mountains made it unequaled for elk and other highland game."

And it was always that way. Our recorded European history, dating from 1805, when Lewis and Clark wandered through here, accounts for less than two per cent of the time humans roamed the Yellowstone. That record, hinted at by archeological finds, places the first people here by 13,050 years ago, in encampments just north of the great bend of the Elk River at present day Livingston, Montana. It was the last of the Pleistocene, and one can now only imagine the richness of the country: blue ice of glaciers, still capping the mountains and receding into the passes, revealing the topography we see today. The steppe land would have teemed with now-extinct species of camel, long-horned bison, tapir, deer, giant sloth and horses. Here and there, saber tooth tigers, dire wolves and short-faced bears prowled the land, stalking the grazers. The valley would have been wet; the high benches pocked with pothole lakes, springs and ponds created by giant beaver. Mastodon browsed spruce trees at the edges of a boreal forest and, in the far distance, a line of mammoth might have paralleled a braided watercourse.

Our recorded European history, dating from 1805, when Lewis and Clark wandered through here, accounts for less than two per cent of the time humans roamed the Yellowstone.

The first Montanans entered an uninhabited land with no human tracks, no smoke on the horizon. Think about it: coming into an increasingly hospitable land, open country in the last days of the Pleistocene, the wildest landscape on earth. It was truly the Great American Adventure.

These voyagers were called Clovis, and they were big game hunters specializing in chasing mammoth. They were the first widely recognized archeological presence in North America. The near-synchronous appearance of the Clovis signature artifact – a large, fluted, exquisitely flaked projectile point, often crafted from the finest cryptocrystalline rock sources – across the country from Montana to Arizona to Florida and Panama within a few hundred years is considered one of the most amazing events in the history of archeology.

It is quite possible that Clovis people emerged from the ice-free corridor out of Alaska and first appeared in the lower United States by way of Montana. It is also possible that their magnificent lithic technology was an American invention, resulting from the necessity of big game hunters coming up with a weapon capable of bringing down shaggy elephants. The birth place of the Clovis complex could well have been in Montana, as the first quality lithic quarries you encounter coming south from the passageway between the great ice sheets are south of the Missouri River and in the Yellowstone River watershed. These claims, however, are contentious; conclusive evidence has yet to be unearthed.

Nonetheless, the fact is that the first appearance of Clovis was synchronous with two other occurrences: the opening of the ice-free corridor between the continental glaciers and the last fossil record of the gigantic short-faced bear, a swift predator and scavenger that stood seven feet at the shoulder. Were humans in the lower states and South America prior to the Clovis event? Probably a few existed here and there but, in any case, not many; the archeological record is very thin or invisible prior to 13,500 years ago. Surely not enough to slow down the Clovis hunters, who blitzkrieged across the continent in 300 years, and there were probably no people in the interior West or Montana. At least there is no scientific evidence, no archeological finds. Paleontologists think the giant short-faced bear preferred higher, well-drained grasslands, mainly west of the Mississippi River. In open country, these carnivores could have run down humans with ease. The most likely, pre-Clovis sites in the contiguous states are in the East. Short-faced bears might have been a problem in the open western grasslands. It might have been easier to survive in the Eastern woodlands.

At any rate, the Yellowstone country looms large in the evolving story of the peopling of the New World. Arguably, the most important archeological dis-

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covery in American prehistory was unearthed on the Shields branch of the Elk River just south of Wilsall, Montana. Here, at the base of a small but imposing cliff on Flathead Creek, a one and a half year-old child was buried, interred with nearly 120 of the most spectacular Clovis artifacts ever seen, all packed in consecrated red ochre and with great ceremony, evidenced by ritually broken spear shafts. These antler tools dated back 13,040 years. Unlike other Clovis "caches," none of these artifacts were made of obsidian. Does it mean that the child was buried before other Clovis folk found the Obsidian Cliffs quarry, 75 raven-miles upstream on the Elk River in present day Yellowstone Park? The lead archeologist has called this sacred site "America's first church."

The Clovis people spread out across most of lower North America in just two or three hundred years. Then, beginning about 13,000 years ago, a series of extinctions swept over North America. The great Pleistocene megafauna disappeared. This paleoextinction is variously blamed on climate change, overhunting by Clovis, introduced disease, or a combination of the above. Scientists like to point out that nearly every animal over 220 pounds died off and only smaller animals survived this wipeout of big mammals. A notable exception was the grizzly (along with bison and chunky humans). The force driving everything was climate. Recent dates on fossil bones suggest most of the megafauna started to drop dead about 13,400 years ago. In another 600 years, as indicated by the fossil record, the extinction was almost complete. The abrupt disappearance of Clovis in the archeological record is marked by a black, carbon-rich layer that dates to 12,900 years ago, a time of sudden chilling, also known as the Younger Dryas. What might have generated the onset of this cold spell? Could it have been related to a reversal of world ocean currents? Perhaps, a comet exploded in the air somewhere in Canada north of the Great Lakes, bringing on the 1,300-year winter. There is evidence of both events.

At the end of this period, around 11,000 years ago, the flora and fauna of the Yellowstone Valley began to resemble what we still see today. Cottonwoods and thickets of edible fruit shrubs occupied the flood plain and, beyond the grassy slopes, a succession of conifers climbed up the mountains toward timberline. Grizzly bears and native people shared the top of the food pyramid. These nomadic bands hunted big game, especially bison; there is evidence for systematic, communal hunting and the first jump sites, where bison were driven over a cliff, show up at this time. This pattern of big game hunting (known as the Paleo-Indian Period) lasted 3,000 years, or until people began to settle down to a lifestyle of generalized hunting and gathering.

Unlike other parts of the country, the first availability of agricultural plants from Mesoamerica did not transform the human cultures of the Elk River Valley into sedentary people. The land was so rich and game so abundant that the tribes never abandoned the hunting way of life. The Neolithic revolution of the Old World failed in the Yellowstone country, although the prehistoric Shoshone made pottery and stone bowls.

The first appearance of Clovis was synchronous with two other occurrences: the opening of the ice-free corridor between the continental glaciers and the last fossil record of the gigantic short-faced bear.

What did change the cultures of the Plains and inter-mountain West was the introduction of the Spanish horse after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Horses first arrived on the Elk River around 1720, reaching the Crow tribes by 1730. Some 30 different tribes became equestrian societies - the fierce, warfare people we see in popular movies. This caused massive cultural change among five different language families whose common tongue was sign language.

The Crow Nation, though a relatively recent tribe of the Elk River, perhaps arriving about 1600, controlled all the Yellowstone country before 1825. Through the familiar process of a litany of threats and deceptions, the white government took most of the land away; the Crow ceded the final piece of Yellowstone bottomland in 1899.

By this time, the buffalo had been slaughtered to near extinction, the 60 million at the time of Lewis and Clark reduced to 23 wild bison the government couldn't catch on the upper Yellowstone in 1902. Grizzlies and wolves, too, were shot on sight until only mountain populations remained. Today, the wild bison and grizzlies mostly live in Yellowstone Park. The Elk River Valley still contains habitat suitable for these animals, but our residual European intolerance has precluded recolonization by bison and carnivores.

It is against this backdrop and history that John Holt* offers us his unique hit on the contemporary Elk River. Many people today know this river intimately. Some have spent a lifetime living and observing segments of this great river valley. But its entirety of 70,000 square miles escapes the individual eye; what we need is the collective phonologies of all the people, fishermen, ranchers, and Indians who live in this intact and rich country.

In the absence of this endeavor, John Holt is the man for the job, having devoted slightly less (we hope) than half of his adult life to this project. Of the many fine writers who contribute to the literature of American trout fishing, I have always found John among the least predictable and, for me, among the most interesting. With *Yellowstone Drift: Floating the Past in Real Time*, he has written something more than a fishing book, bringing his flair for research and novelist's eye to produce the definitive study of the longest un-dammed river in the lower 48 states. The book, like the Yellowstone itself, is a big, sprawling work that blows its banks and meanders throughout the human and natural history of the region. Hovering over the 671-mile journey is Holt's own thunderstorm of a life; the man is not hesitant taking a stand, whether it's a rage against the livestock-centric insanity of killing free-ranging bison that wander beyond Yellowstone Park's boundary or quietly summoning the 500-year flood that would wipe out all the garish trophy homes littering the river's flood plain. Holt's specialty is "nowhere" country, and his accounts of the headwaters of the lower tributaries, the

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Lilly's Strattera drug (chemical name, atomoxetine hydrochloride; $552.1 million in sales in 2005), a concoction designed to treat a condition called Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, invented by the drug industry.

Of course, the prime type of hyperactivity identifiable here is the speed with which the drugmakers have been coining money off the "disorder" they conjured into profitable existence.

Three months earlier, in June of that year, the FDA had stirred from its habitual regulatory torpor to send Lilly a warning letter about a "false and misleading" ad for Strattera, whose effect – the FDA quavered – was "to undermine the consumer's ability to pay attention to and comprehend the risk information." In other words, the FDA was saying that Lilly's ad was designed to cause an actual attention deficit, the better to treat an imaginary "disorder" given the same name. Alas, the watchdog barked too late, since the ad had stopped running a month earlier.

Then, in September 2005, the same month that Kroft dished out a prize to Lilly's ad agency for its Strattera campaign, the FDA found itself alarmed enough to order Lilly to add a warning on Strattera labels to the effect that children and teenagers taking the drug might suffer an increased urge to kill themselves.

One can imagine the fun a sarcastic Mike Wallace might have had, long, long ago, with this orgy of mutually aggrandizing puffery at the Guggenheim ... or can one? After all, long years ago CBS' bottom line wasn't being diligently fed with advertising dollars by the drug industry, a fact which brings us to a fateful moment in 1997.

A Surge of Billions from the Drug Lords

Already by that year of 1997, top executives at the major TV networks were gazing uneasily at the trend lines. Inexorably, it seemed, they were pointing down. The networks were losing audience share, as people surfed to new choices on the remote. As with newspapers and magazines, such reliable sources of revenue as auto commercials and detergent ads were suddenly looking frail, as companies like GM and Procter and Gamble (America's two biggest advertisers) began to plan shifts of their advertising outlays to new media channels. Consumers were starting to have increasing recourse to the Internet to figure out which car to buy and where to buy it. Shadows were looming over network revenues, maybe darker even than on that dreadful night, January 2, 1971, when the Congressional ban on advertising tobacco on radio and TV came into effect.

And then ... a miracle! A very American kind of miracle to be sure, being the sort of miracle achieved by the usual megatonnage of campaign contributions from the drug industry, dropped into the pockets of the relevant FDA overseers in Congress, plus direct lobbying of the FDA by media companies such as Time-Warner. The miracle went by the name of Direct-to-Consumer Advertising (or DTC).

As much as a third of consumers see an ad for some prescription drug on TV and then go off and talk to their doctor about it. Nearly half of the people asking for the drug they've seen advertised end up getting a prescription for it.

Broadcast advertising of prescription drugs in the U.S. had actually been legal for years, but in 1997 the FDA "clarified" the rules about alerting consumers to any risks in a number of deft ways that suddenly made the game a whole lot easier for the drug companies. Thirty-five years after Congress moved to curb pharmaceutical company advertising of amphetamines, antidepressants and barbiturates, the floodgates were opened once again. Through them poured the drug companies and their advertising dollars.

Soon prime time TV viewers were listening to the drug peddlers telling them to make haste to their doctors to request prescriptions for medical conditions, from depression to high blood pressure, by way of allergic reactions supposedly requiring Claritin. This prescription antihistamine was the subject of the first huge prescription ad campaign after the FDA opened the door in 1997. Its sales promptly shot up from $1.4 billion in that year to $2.6 billion in 2000.

At the end of each ad, risk advisories to the consumer would come in the form of an 800 number or the familiar cautions gabbled out at a speed probably intelligible only to ultrasensitive equipment at the National Security Agency.

Back at the start of the 1990s, the drug companies were spending $55 million on DTC ads. By 2003, the outlay had soared to $3 billion; by 2005, to $4.2 billion. Another $7.2 billion was spent in 2005 on promotion to physicians, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office. By 2006, the outlay on DTC ads went to $5.2 billion.

DTC sales-pitching of prescription drugs has been a huge boon to the networks, whose revenues from this source have surged since 1997. NBC, ABC and CBS, in 2007, pulled in $1.64 billion in prescription drug advertising, with CBS leading the pack with its $681,932,100, well ahead of ABC's $449,902,600 and NBC's $420,235,100. Fox lagged far behind, with $92,804,900.

Selling Depression – And More

For the drug lords in the big pharmaceutical companies – America's most profitable industry – the FDA's 1997 decision has, indeed, been a license to print money, bales of it. There are plenty of credible surveys establishing that as much as a third of consumers see an ad for some prescription drug on TV and then go off and talk to their doctor about it. Nearly half of the people asking for the drug they've seen advertised end up getting a prescription for it. One Kaiser study cited by the *Lehrer News Hour* disclosed the gloomy news that almost half these drug ad watchers believe what they're being told.

The consequences have been as predictable as sales drives by the soft drink companies. Hype a product, and people buy it. Between 1999 and 2000, according to one study cited by Katharine Greider in her book *The Big Fix*, "prescriptions for the 50 most heavily advertised drugs rose at six times the rate of all other drugs. Sales of those 50 intensively pro-

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moted drugs were responsible for almost half the increase in Americans' overall drug spending that year."

Advertising, particularly in the area of drugs, thrives on the arousal of such unwholesome emotions as fear, insecurity, envy. The 1990s were a decade which could be labeled the Second Great Depression, although in this case the phenomenon was not economic collapse as in the 1930s, but the intensive drug-company-driven campaign to sell America on the idea that "depression" was the nation's number one problem, to be relieved by hurrying off to the doctor to get a prescription for an antidepressant. With a few honorable exceptions, the press bought into this Second Great Depression in the crucial period of the early Nineties, solemnly citing "expert opinion" from such drug industry flacks as the American Psychiatric Association. Then, after 1997, communications moguls have gotten rich, feeding from the DTC trough, while occasionally raising their heads to bellow out their hymns to "freedom and independence of the press."

But what is "free" or "independent," in any honorable use of the words, about a journalistic medium such as the CBS News division, two of whose journalistic stars – I have in mind Kroft and Wallace – act as touts for the drug companies that are helping to pay their salaries? Kroft handed out the PhAME awards in 2005, and Wallace lauded Zoloft on the network's *CBS Cares* website, attacking critics of the antidepressant drugs such as Zoloft, Paxil or Prozac, all of them associated with harmful or actually lethal episodes.

When NBC was bought by General Electric, there were many voices raised against all the obvious conflicts of interest. After all, GE is a major weapons contractor. What would happen if one of NBC's news programs planned to criticize a GE weapons system? And lo! It duly emerged that GE had, indeed, nixed just such an effort. But that was a few years ago. Standards are laxer and lower now. Movies are chock-a-block with branded objects in every shot, for whose inclusion in the shot the relevant companies have paid a stiff price. Few media outlets dependent on heavy movie advertising dare offend Hollywood, for fear that necessary access to the stars will be blocked.

Similarly, on the networks, drug company advertising has an insidious effect far beyond the simple payout for a 30-second commercial. Who among the dwindling number of producers of investigative news programs will elect to probe a drug company or one of its products when they know that sooner rather than later they will get a call from the advertising department and not long thereafter from a senior executive?

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Would CBS see anything embarrassing about co-sponsoring awards handed out to tobacco companies and their ad agencies for the most adroit campaign to hook teenagers on nicotine? Certainly. Then why is there such indulgence to the drug companies and their ad agencies?

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But the PhAME Awards roll on in all their self-aggrandizing absurdity. For the 2007 affair, CBS sent along Dave Price, its weather anchor and a reporter on *The Early Show*, to do the honors. Among the 2007 PhAME judges was, once again, Tom Delaney, senior vice president at CBS. It was a big night again for Eli Lilly. PhAME judges including the CBS man gave Cymbalta, Lilly's antidepressant, 1st place for Best Branded TV and first place for Best Media Plan. This built on Cymbalta's 2006 showing at the PhAME Awards, where the product pulled 2nd prizes for Best New Product Intro, Best Media Plan and Best Integrated Campaign – all for the "Depression Hurts" promotional push for Cymbalta.

In September 2007, the FDA issued a warning letter about Lilly's ad campaign for Cymbalta, saying a mailer on the drug "is false and misleading in that it overstates the efficacy of Cymbalta and omits some of the most serious and important risk information associated with its use." The FDA ordered Lilly to stop putting out the misleading materials for Cymbalta, which earned Lilly $1.3 billion in sales in 2006. The FDA also specifically singled out Cymbalta in a new warning about the potential for suicidal thoughts among patients taking antidepressants.

Vytorin, an anti-cholesterol drug made by Merck/Schering-Plough, stormed to victory in the 2006 PhAMES, with 1st places in three separate categories. The drug made a plucky showing at the 2007 PhAME event, getting 2nd place, after Cymbalta, for Best Media Plan and 3rd place for Best Interactive Campaign. On January 22, 2008, Merck/Schering-Plough pulled all TV ads for Vytorin and another of its products, Zetia. The ads were recalled after a hail of consumer reports of serious, potentially life-threatening side effects related to rhabdomyolysis, a rare disease involving degeneration and destruction of skeletal muscle.

In the early part of 2007, the drug companies were nervously eyeing a bill working its way through Congress, giving the FDA new powers, including a provision allowing it to bar advertisements for two years following the FDA's approval of a new drug. Desperate to head off this provision, the industry scrambled to show it was a responsible citizen. Companies including Pfizer and Bristol-Myers Squibb voluntarily stopped advertising their prescription drugs for the first 6 or 12 months they were on the market. A trade group issued voluntary guidelines to members to follow while promoting drugs to patients.

By the fall, Congress clicked its heels to the all-powerful drug lobby. The two-year moratorium disappeared, replaced by a system of fines for ads deemed misleading or false. Also dumped was a provision warning of as yet unknown potential risks for new drugs.

With Congress, as with the networks, the drug industry's bucks once again talked, long after the casualty figures were in, even though DTC drug advertising should have gone into the graveyard where it belongs, alongside its victims. **CP**

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Tongue and Powder rivers, constitute my favorite sections of the book. Here is Kerouac-style old-time adventure and exploration into a lonely, stark landscape, rich in history and rendered luminous by Ginny Diers' fine photography. At sunset, there's trout and catfish and grouse cooked over a cottonwood fire, washed down by many bottles of wine, with romance drifting on the evening air. This is a classic rundown Montana's finest country, and we are lucky to have such a guide. CP

*John Holt's *Yellowstone Drift: Floating the Past in Real Time* will be published by CounterPunch Books/AK Press this spring, with the above introduction by Doug Peacock, one of America's finest environmental writers.

Doug Peacock lives mostly in Montana. His books include *Walking It Off:A Veteran's Chronicle of War and Wilderness*; *Grizzly Years: In Search of the American Wilderness*; and, with Andrea Peacock, *The Essential Grizzly: The Mingled Fates of Men and Bears.*
He can be reached at dougpeacock@earthlink.net.

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of Georgia had been interviewed on C-SPAN in Statuary Hall, and he made forceful, cogent points on behalf of the Republicans. It was hard to restrain the impression that the G.O.P. would have done much better with this congress-

Then, there was his cheap and ignorant shot at volcano research - an odd thing coming from a fellow who is seeking millions of dollars from the federal government.

man – an attractive and articulate man who didn't talk down to his audience and didn't lace his remarks with buzz words – than with Jindal. A lot of Jindal's points didn't make much sense. At one point, relating an anecdote concerning Harry Lee, the late sheriff of Jefferson Parish, he actually engaged in criticism of the previous Republican administration and their disastrous handling of Katrina. Then, there was his cheap and ignorant shot at volcano research - an odd thing coming from a fellow who is seeking millions of dollars from the federal government in disaster relief and unaware of how important such volcanic research is for millions of Americans who live within a few miles of active volcanoes. This was all delivered in a flat, uninflected manner, pouring out an unceasing stream of platitudes. It's no wonder that James Carville said that this was not the time for a speech for the Strawberry Festival in Ponchatoula!

It is too soon to say if Jindal's restlessness, his unease in staying in one place, his implacable ambition has become too much for him, and will eventually bring him low. He is by no means on an effortless track to the nomination and the White House. Albeit a likeable enough fellow, it is pretty clear – looking and listening to him that Tuesday night (which was Mardi Gras in Louisiana) – that he is not ready for prime time. And he may never be. CP

Donald Juneau is a member of the Louisiana state bar. He is based in Hammond, LA and can be reached at MOZARABICA@aol.com.

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